

Vital key

Prayer is another vital key to victorious Christian living. It is impossible for believers to grow in their relationship with Christ if prayer is absent or weak in their lives.

Consider these biblical truths:

- Prayer satisfies the deepest needs of the human heart (Psalm 42:1-2)
- Prayer aids our fight against sin and temptation (Matthew 26:41)
- Prayer is the way God has given us to deal with worry (Philippians 4:6-9)
- Prayer is a means of discovering God's guidance (James 1:5)

Prayer is the second part of our line of communication with God. God speaks to us through His Word and by His Spirit, and we respond to Him through prayer.

Prayer is simply talking with God from the heart in a language that is natural and comfortable to you. As breathing is necessary for your physical life, prayer is necessary for your spiritual life.

While breathing is an automatic function, prayer is not. You therefore need to learn the discipline of daily prayer if you are to enjoy the benefits that come from regularly communicating with God.

The following four elements will help you to pray "prayers that work".

Direction

For prayer to be effective in your life it must be aimed in the right direction.

What do the following references tell you about where to direct your prayers?

Matthew 6:9 _____

Philippians 4:6 _____

The next important step to consider is ... Self-Preparation.

Self-Preparation

The following elements of self-preparation are prerequisites for an effective prayer life.

a) Right heart

How will a wrong heart affect your prayers?

Psalm 66:18 _____

b) Right motive

What does this verse reveal about praying with a wrong motive?

James 4:3 _____

c) Right relationships

Having right relationships will aid your prayers. What's your responsibility in relationships?

1 Peter 3:7 _____

What happens if you ignore this instruction? _____

d) Right confidence

In whom should you place your confidence when you pray?

1 John 5:14a _____

e) Right condition

What condition does God place upon your prayers before He will hear you?

1 John 5:14b _____

The next important step to consider is ... Message presentation.

Message presentation

Here are some practical suggestions for preparing your prayers (messages).

a) Be balanced

Avoid praying the same prayer all the time. Vary and balance your prayers using the three essential elements stated in Philippians 4:6-7. These elements are:

- Personal requests: Personal needs and desires you express to God
- Petitions: requests you make for other people and projects
- Thanksgiving: Thank the Lord in **advance** for His answers and provision for your needs.

Read Philippians 4:6-7.

b) Be specific

A common mistake is to be too general in prayer. Be specific about everything. This is the type of prayer you will be able to see when answered by God.

What specifics does Jesus teach in the prayer He modelled to His disciples?

Matthew 6:7-13 _____

c) Be persistent

Many Christians often pray once for something and no more, or they become discouraged and stop praying for something after just a short time. Keep in mind that the Lord often delays answers to our prayers for good reasons.

Patient persistence demonstrates your willingness to trust God and His perfect timing for answers.

Why did the judge finally give in and satisfy the woman's grievance?

Luke 18:1-8 _____

d) Be systematic

Using a simple prayer list will help you to remember each of your prayer concerns.

Note: Satan will do his best to steal away the memory of your prayer points.

What did Paul boast about in the following verse?

1Thessalonians 1:2b _____

e) Be consistent

Consistency is a vital element in effective prayer. Praying short prayers throughout the day as concerns come to mind is what being constant is all about.

What do the following references say about this?

Romans 12:12b _____

1 Thessalonians 5:17 _____

Finally, we need to consider the ... Message ending.

Message ending

Your prayer requests need to be made in the “name of Jesus Christ”. To pray in Christ’s name is to express a prayer that is consistent with His life and teaching – such a prayer that Jesus would pray if He were in your situation.

Jesus says in John 14:13: “... *Whatever you ask in my name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*”

Summary

When your prayers have the right direction, preparation, presentation and ending you can be confident that God will always answer your prayers in ways that are best for you. Be prepared. For your benefit, the Lord may answer you in one of the following ways:

- No (1 Chronicles 28:2, 3; 2 Corinthians 12:7-9)
- Not now (Psalm 27:14, 40:1)
- Yes, or (1 Kings 3:12; Matthew 8:5-13)
- Yes, plus! (1 Kings 3:13,14; Ephesians 3:20)

It’s worthwhile to commit to memory the following promise ...

“The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and wonderful results”
(James 5:16b).

